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Abstract

A study was conducted of all undergraduate students who withdrew from courses at Hofstra University during the Fall 1966 semester. This report presents a descriptive analysis of the findings of this study. During the semester, 12% of the enrolled undergraduates withdrew from one or more courses. The highest rates of course withdrawals were associated with males, lower classmen, day students, those with relatively low GPAs, and those majoring in the natural sciences or business. Of those who cited reasons for withdrawal (69%), personal reasons were given most often by upperclassmen and evening students, and academic reasons most often by underclassmen and day students. In comparing early and late withdrawals during the semester, it was found that later withdrawals were associated with males, day students, and those with GPAs under 3.00. Twenty percent of the withdrawals occurred during the last week of the semester. A comparison of Hofstra's withdrawal policies with other NYC area schools and Harvard University revealed that Hofstra's requirements appear to be less stringent in regard to when withdrawal is permitted and whose approval is necessary. It is concluded that although change in withdrawal policy should be considered in terms of its overall effect on student learning, it would be difficult to predict the effect of such change. (DS)

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HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

Students Who Withdraw from Courses: A Descriptive Analysis

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A study was conducted of all undergraduate students who withdrew from courses at Hofstra University during the Fall 1966 semester. The purpose of the study was to describe the extent to which students withdraw from courses, the characteristics of students who withdraw from courses, the reasons given for withdrawing, the differences between students who withdraw early in a semester and those who withdraw late in the semester, and the withdrawal policies at a sample of other institutions. The descriptive data can be summarized as follows. All differences mentioned were statistically significant.

Extent of withdrawal. 1) During the semester under study, 12% of the enrolled undergraduates withdrew from one or more courses. Almost two-thirds of these (65%) withdrew from only one course; only 15% of the undergraduates withdrew from more than two courses. 2) A study of students who had graduated indicated that four out of ten (41%) never withdrew from a course while in college. Approximately one out of four (28%) withdrew from courses in two or more semesters. Thus some students tend to withdraw from courses while others do not.

Characteristics of withdrawers. 1) Students who do not withdraw from courses tend to obtain slightly higher mean grade point averages than those who do withdraw (2.80 vs. 2.60), and those who withdraw less have slightly higher mean grade point averages than those who withdraw more (2.22 vs. 2.06 for the Fall 1966 withdrawers, and 2.65 vs. 2.27 for a sample of students who had graduated). 2) A higher percentage of day students withdrew from courses than did evening students (13% vs. 8%). 3) Fewer seniors withdrew than did lower classmen (9% vs. 15%). 4) Males tended to withdraw more often than females (14% vs. 9%). 5) There were differential withdrawal rates in different areas of the university. Students in the natural sciences and in business had withdrawal rates of 15% and 14% respectively, compared to students in the social sciences, 12%, and humanities, 11%. Thus the highest rates of withdrawal were associated with the following groups: males, lower classmen, day students, those with relatively low GPA's, and those majoring in the natural sciences or business.

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Reasons given for withdrawing. 1) Approximately one-third of the students (31%) did not indicate a reason for withdrawal on their cards even though this is presumably required. Of those who gave reasons, slightly more gave academic reasons than gave personal reasons (36% vs. 30%). 2) Evening students tended to cite personal reasons more than day students (58% vs. 24%), and to cite academic reasons less (17% vs. 40%). 3) Students with GPA's under 2.00 cited academic reasons less than other students, and failed to list any reason more often than other students. 4) Upper classmen tended to cite personal reasons more often than lower classmen; seniors were more apt to state reasons than were others (77% vs. 67%). Thus, personal reasons tended to be cited more by upper classmen and evening students.

Comparison of early and late withdrawers. 1) A comparatively large percentage of students (20%) withdrew during the last week of the semester. The other withdrawals were fairly constant at 7-8% (of the total withdrawals, .9% of the enrolled students) per week. 2) On the average, more evening students withdrew earlier in the semester, while day students withdrew later in the semester. 3) Better students (with GPA over 3.00) tended to withdraw early in the semester; students with a GPA under 3.00 tended to withdraw later. 4) Comparatively more females withdrew early in the semester while males tended to wait. Thus, later withdrawals were associated with: females, day students, and those with GPA's under 3.00.

Withdrawal policies. Hofstra's withdrawal policy permits students to withdraw until the end of the semester. In theory, the withdrawing student will be given either a passing or a failing grade depending on his performance in the course. In practice, only 4% of the students who withdraw receive grades of "F" even though evidence indicates that a large percent are in academic difficulty. A survey of withdrawal policies at other schools indicated that: 1) about one-third permit withdrawal until the end of the semester and one-half permit it only until mid-semester; 2) most of the institutions (57%) included the grade of withdrawal-failing in the students' GPA; and 3) a majority of institutions required permission from either the student's advisor and/or the dean of the school.

Conclusions. While the absolute number of withdrawals from courses during a given semester may seem relatively high, the relative percentage is low. There is evidence that different groups of students withdraw at different rates, at different times, and for different reasons. One inference that could be made is that a substantial proportion of the withdrawers are not doing well in the course. Changes in withdrawal policy should be considered in terms of their overall effect on student learning.

If changes in withdrawal policy were to be instituted, it would be difficult to predict what the effects of such change would be.

(Copies of the full report are available from the Center for the Study of Higher Education)

Introduction

The present study dealt with all undergraduate students who withdrew from one or more courses at Hofstra University during one semester. Its purpose was primarily descriptive and it was designed to answer the following questions: 1) What was the extent of the withdrawal problem? 2) What were the characteristics of withdrawers in terms of GPA (cumulative grade point average), day-evening student status, class, sex, and major field of study? 3) Why did students withdraw? 4) Were there differences between early and late withdrawers?

The final section of this report compares the withdrawal policy of Hofstra University with the policies of other institutions.

Method

The sample consisted of all undergraduate students who had withdrawn from one or more courses during the Fall 1966 semester; a total of 900 students who had withdrawn from 1,554 courses. Since undergraduates were permitted to make program changes during the first three weeks of the semester, only withdrawals occurring after that period were included. Graduate students, unlike undergraduates, were permitted to withdraw from a course any time during the semester, and their instructor's approval was not needed. Due to this different policy in effect for graduate students, they were eliminated from the present study.

Data relating to students' date of withdrawal, reasons for withdrawal, and number of courses dropped was available from cards which students were required to submit when withdrawing from a course. Major field of study, GPA, day-evening status, and class were taken from school records.

For comparative purposes, a random sample of 100 June 1968 graduates was studied in order to analyze the extent of withdrawal during the entire college careers of a group of students. This sample was selected as follows: 1) The transcripts of graduates were arranged in alphabetical order. 2) A systematic sample was obtained by selecting every eighth transcript until the number to be used (100) was reached. 3) Transfer students were eliminated. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, no a priori hypothises were made. Verification of the significant differences found would require further research.

The Extent of the Withdrawal Problem

As indicated in the methods section, results will be presented for two samples, the Fall 1966 withdrawers and the group of selected June 1968 graduates.

Fall 1966 sample. During the Fall 1966 semester, the total undergraduate enrollment at Hofstra University was 7,436 students. Those who withdrew from courses during this term, 900 students, constituted 12% of the enrollment. During the same period, 195 graduate students withdrew; this constituted 4% of their enrollment.

The number and percent of undergraduates who withdrew from one or more courses is presented in Table 1. It can be seen that 15% of the withdrawers dropped three or more courses, and that the majority of withdrawers (65%) dropped only one course. Students withdrawing from five or more courses (7%) were most likely withdrawing from school completely. This underestimates the percentage of students withdrawing from school, since students who were enrolled in less than five courses and dropped all their courses are included in the other categories.

Table 1

Number of Courses Dropped

No. of Courses	Students N	Students %	Cumulative Percent
1	588	65	100
2	184	20	35
3	33	4	15
4	37	4	11
5-9	58	7	7
Total	900	100	

June 1968 graduates. The sample of 100 graduates was analyzed to determine the number of semesters during which a student withdrew from one or more courses. Of the 100 students, 10 had been in attendance at Hofstra for ten semesters, the others were all eight-semester students. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. Approximately 40% of this sample had never withdrawn from a course. Only 8% had withdrawn during three or more semesters (one student had withdrawn during five semesters, the seven others withdrew during three). Of the students who had withdrawn (59%), most of them had withdrawn during only one semester. Twenty-eight percent of these graduates had withdrawn during two or more semesters.

Table 2

Semesters of Withdrawal for Hofstra Graduates

No. of semesters during which student withdrew	Percent (N=100)	Cumulative Percent
0	41	100
1	31	59
2	20	28
3 or more	8	8

The results of this section can be summarized as follows: 12% of the undergraduate enrollment withdrew from one or more courses. Of these withdrawers, almost two-thirds (65%) withdrew from only one course. In a sample of the college careers of graduates, about 40% had never withdrawn; most had withdrawn during only one semester.

Characteristics of Withdrawers

This section of the report explores five characteristics of the Fall 1966 withdrawers: their cumulative grade point averages, day-evening student status, class, sex, and major field of study. In addition, the GPA of the sample of June 1968 graduates is reported.

GPA. The GPA for the Fall 1966 withdrawers was taken as of June 1967. The data presented are based on 699 of the 900 withdrawers; the remaining 201 students were no longer in attendance as of June 1967, and comparable data on their performance was not available. Table 3 presents the average cumulative GPA of students who withdrew from one, two, and three courses during the Fall 1966 semester. Those students who withdrew from only one course obtained a significantly higher GPA than those who had withdrawn from two or more courses (2.22 vs. 2.06; $t = 3.05$, $p < .01$).

The difference between the GPA's of those students withdrawing from two courses (2.12) and those withdrawing from three or more courses (1.94) was not statistically significant ($t = 1.66$, $p > .05$).

Table 3

Cumulative GPA and Courses Dropped

No. of Courses Dropped	GPA	N
1	2.22	501
2	2.12	140
3 or more	1.94	58
Total	2.18	699

Table 4 presents the GPA's of the sample of June 1968 graduates, for students who never withdrew, and those who withdrew during one, two, or three or more semesters. There was a significant difference between the GPA's of students who never withdrew and those who withdrew during one or more semesters (2.80 vs. 2.60; $t = 2.35$, $p < .02$). There was no difference in GPA between students withdrawing during one or two semesters. There was a significant difference in GPA's between those who withdrew during one or two terms and those who withdrew during three or more terms (2.65 vs. 2.27; $t = 3.50$, $p < .001$).

Table 4

GPA and Semesters of Withdrawal

Number of Semesters During Which Student Withdrew	GPA	N
0	2.80	41
1	2.63	31
2	2.67	20
3 or more	2.27	8
Total	2.68	100

Day-evening. Table 5 presents the number of withdrawers and non-withdrawers who were day or evening students, and their percent of the enrollment during the semester under study (Fall 1966).

Table 5

Day or Evening Status of Withdrawers

	Status			
	Day		Evening	
	N	%	N	%
Non-withdrawers	4,806	87	1,730	92
Withdrawers	740	13	160	8
Total Enrollment	5,546	100	1,890	100

A greater percent of day students were withdrawers than evening students. Whereas 13% of the day student enrollment withdrew from courses, only 8% of the evening students did so. These proportions are significantly different ($t = 5.61$, $p < .001$). A comparison of the number of courses dropped by day and evening students was not attempted because of differences in course loads.

Class. The number of withdrawers in each class, and their percent of the enrollment are presented in Table 6. New College students and those who were considered unclassified students are eliminated from this table. There was a significant difference in the number of withdrawers by class ($X^2 = 33.89$, $p < .001$). The smallest percentage of withdrawers were in the senior class (9%), as compared with 13%, 16%, and 14% in the freshmen, sophomore, and junior classes respectively. The differences between each of the figures and the senior withdrawers were all significant ($t = 2.97$, 5.68, and 4.41, respectively, all significant at the .01 level or beyond). The comparisons made here and for other tables of this study were not based on a priori predictions; thus verification of the differences found is dependent upon further research. The percentage of withdrawers in the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes were not significantly different from each other.

Table 6

Class of Withdrawers

	Class							
	Freshmen		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-withdrawers	1,100	87	1,654	84	1,395	86	1,471	91
Withdrawers	162	13	309	16	234	14	152	9
Total enrollment	1,262	100	1,963	100	1,629	100	1,623	100

An analysis was made of the number of courses dropped by students in each class. There were no significant differences in the number of courses dropped by class.

Sex. The sex of the withdrawers, and the percent of enrollment by sex is presented in Table 7. A greater proportion of the male enrollment (14%) withdrew from courses than the female enrollment (9%). This difference was statistically significant ($t = 5.58$, $p < .001$). A comparison of the number of courses dropped by men and women showed no significant differences.

Table 7

Sex of Withdrawers

	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Non-withdrawers	3,914	86	2,622	91
Withdrawers	626	14	274	9
Total enrollment	4,540	100	2,896	100

Major field of study. Major areas of study were combined into four areas: business, social science, natural science, and humanities.

Education majors were required to have a dual major and the data available listed only their liberal arts major. Consequently, they do not appear in a separate category but were coded within the four categories used. Because of lack of comparable data New College students, students who were undecided about their major, and those whose major was subsumed under an "other" category were not included. There was a difference by major area of study ($X^2 = 15.56$, $p < .01$). Individual significance tests indicated that a larger percentage of the natural science students withdraw than those in the humnaities (15% vs. 11%; $t = 3.59$, $p < .001$), and the social sciences (15% vs. 12%; $t = 2.98$, $p < .01$). There was also a tendency for students with a major in "business" to withdraw more than those in the humanities (14% vs. 11%; $t = 2.15$, $p < .05$). There were no significant differences in the number of courses dropped by students in different major areas of study.

Table 8

Major Area of Withdrawers

	Business		Soc. Sci.		Nat. Sci.		Humanities	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-withdrawers	1,023	86	1,746	88	1,115	85	1,427	89
Withdrawers	162	14	235	12	204	15	176	11
Total enrollment	1,185	100	1,981	100	1,319	100	1,603	100

The following characteristics of the withdrawers emerged from this section: a) students who withdrew more performed poorer than those who withdrew less; b) in a sample of graduates, those who never withdrew were better performers than those who had withdrawn; c) more day students withdraw than evening students; d) fewer seniors than all other classes; and e) more males than females; f) more natural science majors than those in the humanities and social sciences.

In interpreting the results of this section, it should be noted that although withdrawers showed some statistically significant differences on the characteristics studied, these differences were of small magnitude. Thus, although the differences describe the sample of withdrawers, they are not particularly meaningful in terms of recommendations for policy changes.

Reasons for Withdrawal

The data on reasons for withdrawal were statements made by students on their course withdrawal cards. The various reasons were grouped into two major categories: personal and academic reasons. In addition, a "none" category was also used. The reasons subsumed under personal were: family problems, illness, job-school conflict, lack of time to study, lack of transportation, unable to attend those hours, financial problems, and "personal." The category of academic reasons consisted of: too heavy course load, unprepared (academically) for course, course too difficult, avoiding an F, inappropriate course, instructor's advice, and instructor unsatisfactory. The "none" category, in addition to including students who gave no reason, also included a number of students who gave "withdrawal" as their reason, with no other substantive reason.

Data on reasons for withdrawal is presented for the total sample and for breakdowns by day-evening status, GPA, class and sex.

Day-evening. Table 9 presents the distribution of the reasons given for withdrawal for the total sample, and for the day and evening students separately. The "mixed" category in this table refers to those students who dropped more than one course, and gave different reasons

Table 9

Reasons for Withdrawal

Reasons	Day		Evening		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal	179	24	93	58	272	30
Academic	293	40	27	17	320	36
None	244	33	36	22	280	31
Mixed	24	3	4	3	28	3
Total	740	100	160	100	900	100

which could be coded in more than one of the three categories. Students who dropped more than one course and gave reasons which could all be

coded in one category, were counted once within the appropriate category.

For the total sample of withdrawers, personal reasons and no reasons were each given by a little less than one-third of the students (30% and 31%). Academic reasons were cited by 36%. This obtained distribution of reasons, i.e., a difference of small magnitude in the percentages giving academic and personal reasons, was in contrast to reasons given to members of the Hofstra staff who interview students wishing to withdraw from a course. These staff members stated that academic reasons were given much more frequently than personal reasons.

There was a significant difference between the reasons given for withdrawal by day and evening students ($X^2 = 74.10$, $p < .001$). Evening students listed personal reasons more than twice as often as day students (53% vs. 24%; $t = 8.48$, $p < .001$), and day students listed academic reasons more frequently (40% vs. 17%; $t = 5.44$, $p < .001$). In addition, day students gave no reason for withdrawing more often than evening students (33% vs. 22%; $t = 2.59$, $p < .01$).

GPA. An analysis was made of the relationship between GPA and reasons for withdrawal. The GPA's of the withdrawers were divided into four categories: below 2.00, 2.00-2.49, 2.50-2.99, and 3.00 and above. The number and percents of students within each GPA category and the reasons they gave for withdrawal is presented in Table 10. Data on GPA is presented only for those students who were in attendance as of June 1967.

Table 10

GPA and Reasons for Withdrawal

	GPA							
	3.00 or greater		2.50-2.99		2.00-2.49		Below 2.00	
Reason	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal	18	27	24	20	68	26	65	26
Academic	33	49	59	51	119	45	84	33
None	14	21	31	27	70	27	91	36
Mixed	2	3	2	2	6	2	13	5
Total	67	100	116	100	263	100	253	100

There was a significant relationship between reasons given for withdrawal and students' GPA's (X^2 = 20.01, $p < .02$). Of students who obtained GPA's of 2.00 or greater, about one-half cited academic reasons, (range was 45% - 51%) and one-quarter gave no reason (range of 21% - 27%). However, of the poor performers, those obtaining GPA's below 2.00, only one-third (33%) gave academic reasons and 36% gave no reason. The difference between the proportions of those citing academic reasons whose GPA's were below 2.00 and 2.00 and above was statistically significant (t = 3.63, $p < .01$), as was the difference between these two groups in the proportions giving no reason (t = 2.84, $p < .01$).

Class. The distribution of reasons for withdrawal given by students in each class is presented in Table 11. New College students and those who were considered unclassified students are eliminated from this table. There was a significant relationship between reasons given

Table 11

Class and Reasons for Withdrawal

	Class							
	Freshmen		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
Reason	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal	44	27	75	24	78	33	52	34
Academic	59	37	117	38	76	33	62	41
None	57	35	102	33	73	31	35	23
Mixed	2	1	15	5	7	3	3	2
Total	162	100	309	100	234	100	152	100

and class (X^2 = 17.28, $p < .05$). The following specific differences between classes were noted: 1) Upper classmen (juniors and seniors) gave personal reasons for withdrawal more frequently than lower classmen (t = 2.70, $p < .01$); 2) Seniors gave no reason for their withdrawals less frequently than all other classes (t = 2.38, $p < .02$).

Sex. There was no significant differences in reasons for withdrawal between males and females.

The preceding section can be summarized as follows: academic

reasons were given by 36% of the sample, and personal reasons by 30%. No reason for withdrawal was given by 31%. Thus no one reason emerged as primary. However, the Hofstra staff who interviewed withdrawers cited academic reasons as the most frequent reason given. Various relationships between student characteristics and reasons for withdrawal were explored.

A Comparison of Early and Late Withdrawers

To determine the percentage of students who withdrew during each week, the Fall 1966 semester was divided into 12 weeks, extending from October 17 (first week after which program changes were no longer permitted) to January 14. The largest percentage of students, 20%, withdrew during the last week of the semester preceding finals (January 9 - January 13). The remainder of the withdrawals were distributed fairly evenly throughout the other eleven weeks, about 7% - 8% each week.

In order to compare early and late withdrawers, the semester was divided into three four-week periods, October 17 - November 12; November 14 - December 10; and December 12 - January 14. For the total sample of withdrawers the largest percentage of students, 40%, withdrew during the middle period. The remaining students, 5%, withdrew during two or more periods. Analyses comparing early and late withdrawers were made for breakdowns by day-evening status, GPA, class, and sex. Early withdrawers were those who withdrew during the first period; late withdrawers, those withdrawing during the last period. The middle group was included to determine whether the relationships studied were approximately linear.

Day-evening. Table 12 presents the number and percent of day and evening students who withdrew during each of the three time periods. Students who withdrew during two or more periods are coded in the mixed category. There was a significant difference in the time of withdrawal for day and evening students ($X^2 = 14.47$, $p < .01$). More evening students withdrew during the first period, 41% as compared with 27% of the day students ($t = 3.76$, $p < .001$). More day students withdrew during the final period, 42% as compared with 32% of the evening students ($t = 2.43$, $p < .02$). The middle period did not distinguish between day and evening students.

Table 12

Day-Evening Status and Time of Withdrawal

Date	Day		Evening	
	N	%	N	%
October 17 - November 12	195	27	66	41
November 14 - December 10	193	26	36	23
December 12 - January 14	313	42	51	32
Mixed	39	5	7	4
Total	740	100	160	100

GPA. The relationship between time of withdrawal and GPA is presented in Table 13. There was a significant difference in the time of withdrawal by GPA ($X^2 = 24.85$, $p < .01$). More students who had obtained

Table 13

GPA and Time of Withdrawal

	GPA							
	3.00 or greater		2.50-2.99		2.00-2.49		Below 2.00	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Oct. 17- Nov. 12	32	48	35	30	65	25	53	21
Nov. 14 - Dec. 10	16	24	26	23	67	25	70	28
Dec. 12 - Jan. 14	17	25	50	43	119	45	111	44
Mixed	2	3	5	4	12	5	19	7
Total	67	100	116	100	263	100	253	100

GPA's of 3.00 or greater withdrew during the first period, 48% compared with 24% for students with GPA's below 3.00 ($t = 4.16$, $p < .001$). These

better performers (GPA's 3.00 or better) withdrew less during the final period than the other students (25% vs. 44%; $t = 2.98$, $p < .01$).

Sex. Data on the differences in time of withdrawal by sex is presented in Table 14. The relationship between sex and time of withdrawal was significant ($X^2 = 10.71$, $p < .02$). Females withdrew more during the first period (36% vs. 26% for males; $t = 3.12$, $p < .01$). Males withdrew more during the final period (43% vs. 35% for females, $t = 2.33$, $p < .02$). There was no significant sex difference for the middle period of withdrawal.

Table 14

Sex and Time of Withdrawal

	Sex			
	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
October 17 - November 12	162	26	99	36
November 14 - December 10	164	26	65	24
December 12 - January 14	269	43	95	35
Mixed	31	5	15	5
Total	626	100	274	100

Class. The relationship between class and time of withdrawal was not significant.

The greatest percent of students (20%) withdrew during the final week of the semester, during the rest of the semester, approximately 7%-8% of the students withdrew each week. The breakdowns of time of withdrawal by student characteristics were: evening students withdrew earlier than day students, better performers (GPA of 3.00 or greater) withdrew earlier than poorer performers, and females withdrew earlier than males.

Withdrawal Policies of Various Institutions

The withdrawal policy at Hofstra University during the Fall 1966 semester provided for the assignment of the grades W, X, or Y upon a

student's withdrawal from a course. The official policy with regard to these grades was:

1. The grade of W (withdrawn) was assigned to a student withdrawing during the first three weeks of a semester.

2. After the first three weeks, the student received a grade of W if he was doing passing work, of X if he was doing failing work. The instructor could make exception to the X notation only in cases of illness or other situations beyond the student's control. The grade of X was treated as an F and included in the student's cumulative average.

3. A student who withdrew from a course without notification received the grade of Y. The Y grade was treated as an F unless exception was made by the instructor with final approval of the Dean of Faculties or the Dean of University College.

In actual practice it was easy for a student to obtain permission to withdraw and receive a grade of W up until final exam time. Of the 1,554 courses dropped by the students included in this study, 1,498 courses, or 96% were dropped with a grade of W. Thus an X grade, which presumably would serve as a deterrent to withdrawal was almost never given.

A withdrawal policy should include guidelines on: 1) When are students permitted to withdraw (up to a specified date or throughout the term)? 2) What grades are to be assigned for withdrawn courses? and 3) Whose approval will be needed to withdraw?

The policies of fourteen universities in regard to these questions were reviewed. The schools included were Marymount, Manhattan, Molloy, Queens, Nassau Community, Suffolk Community, and Post Colleges; Columbia, Adelphi, St. Johns, New York, Harvard, and Long Island Universities; and S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook. These schools are all in the New York City area, except Harvard which was selected for purposes of contrast. Data was obtained from school catalogs.

In five (36%) of these institutions (Harvard, Queens, Post, Nassau, and Suffolk) no date limitation is set for withdrawal; the student may withdraw up through the last day of classes. One institution provided for withdrawal only until the third week of class, and one until the fourth week of class. In the remaining institutions (50%), withdrawals were permitted up until approximately mid-semester; specific dates varied somewhat from school to school.

Eleven of the schools assigned withdrawal-passing and withdrawal-failing grades. Of these, eight (73%) included the withdrawal-failing

grade in the student's average. Three institutions gave no withdrawal-failing grade, and one of these (Harvard) permitted students to receive half-credit for a course withdrawn from at mid-semester, if grades had been satisfactory.

The schools varied widely in their policies as to whose permission was needed for withdrawal. Only one school required just the instructor's permission. Three required approval by both instructor and advisor, and three required permission of the dean of the school. Other variations included permission from: advisor and dean of the school, Committee on Scholastic Standards, advisor or dean, "someone from dean's office," advisor alone. In two schools, no withdrawal procedures were described.

Most of these institutions appear to have more stringent requirements than Hofstra in regard to both when withdrawal is permitted and whose approval is necessary. However, it is hard to assess the extent to which the official policies of these institutions are adhered to in actual practice.